Concio ad Clerum.

A

SERMON

Preach'd to the

CLERGY

AT THE

Arch-Deacon's Viſitation,

Held at *Huntington*, *May* 19. 1696.

Publiſht at their Requeſt.

To which is added a PREFACE to the CLERGY.

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LONDON,

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To his Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, and more especially to those who are under the Jurisdiction of the Arch-Deacon of *Huntington*, and were Auditors of the following Discourse.

THE *Christian Church began, and was established, in all its Essentials, by that Authority which Christ himself gave to his Apostles, his first Commission-Officers: and 'twas by the care and faithfulness of them and their Successors (together with the special presence of Christ with them, and his undoubted blessing upon their honest Endeavours) that it shall last to the end of the World. Though therefore we are sure the Church shall never utterly fail or be destroyed, so long as the Heavens and the Earth, which are now, shall endure; yet it may ebb and flow, decay and flourish, loose its strength and comeliness, and recover them again; and undergo innumerable changes and alterations in the several parts and branches of it: But, I think, it may truly be said, that no particular Church, so well constituted as ours is, can turn to decay (much less can it die and be extinguished) where the Clergy are Learned and Prudent, Sincere and Diligent, Unanimous and Zealous, in the discharge of their several Offices. And this Consideration gives us great reason to hope, that the days of the prosperity of this Church may not be so short, as too many do wish they may; and many others are ready to Propheſie, they, certainly, will be: For no Church, of the same extent, can shew so many Learned, Wise, and Industrious Clergy-men, as ours can do, at this day. Now, if all these were also truly unanimous in their Counsells, and firmly united, and unfeignedly zealous in their Endeavours, for the promoting the common Cause of Christi-*

anity amongſt us, they might ſo far influence, animate, and direct the whole Body of the Clergy, as to make them the Inſtruments of Curing the moſt dangerous diſtempers of this Church: and of bringing of it likewiſe to great beauty and perfection. And that all ſorts and degrees of the Clergy, whether they be high or low, may be truly ſerviceable to the Church, and inſtrumental towards the healing her breaches, and making up of her defects; they ſhould take great heed unto themſelves, that they may have right and clear ſpirits within them, i. e. *Neither diſtorted with Vice, nor polluted or ſowred with any kind of peccant humour: They ſhould not be envious, peeviſh, or malignant againſt any; and much leſs ſhould they be ſo againſt one another. They ſhould not be of lofty, moroſe, covetous, or ſelfiſh Spirits; but of minds really generous, loving, humble, meek, tractable, and charitable towards all; ever rejoicing in truth, and in that which is good, what ever condition themſelves are in. And, in a word, they ſhould, above all men, look, not every man on his own things, but every man (amongſt them eſpecially) alſo on the things of others,* Phil. 2. 4. *and as it follows in the next Verſe,* to let this mind be in them, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, *&c. and let me add, That was in his moſt noble, heroical, and moſt faithful Servant St.* Paul, *as 'tis partly ſet forth in the following diſcourſe. And then they muſt needs be bleſſings to the Church, let their own ſtations in it be what they will. For if we obſerve matters narrowly, and will judge according to righteous judgment, 'twill appear, that 'tis mens ſeeking their own, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt, that makes them they are not always ſerviceable to the affairs of the Church: For if men were of right Spirits, they would ever be of pure minds, and alſo peaceable, modeſt, and humble in all their behaviour: and if they*

could

could not ſerve the cauſe of true Religion in one kind, they would not fail to do it in another; and 'tis the doing what we can in our Capacities that makes our ſervices acceptable to God and Men.

And if any ſee it neceſſary to advertiſe or reprove their Brethren, for ſome dangerous ſlips they may have made, or for ſome pernicious Errours they may, unawares, have fallen into: they ſhould, undoubtedly, do it in the moſt friendly manner; and they ought not to exceed the bounds of Charity, nor the Laws of the ſpirit of Meekneſs in a work of ſo nice and difficult a nature. And if all the ſacred Tribe had duly regarded the great Apoſtles advice, Gal. 6. 1. *we ſhould not have heard of ſuch ſnarlings, and bitings, and opening of Mouths, amongſt them, as if they would devour one another. For it is not to be told in* Gath, *nor publiſhed in the ſtreets of* Askalon, *what bitter Satyrs and invectives ſome Clergy-men have, of late, publiſhed againſt their Brethren. But if they who ſhould teach all Mankind, and be Exemplary to them in every grace of the Spirit, ſhall give themſelves the liberty to chaſten one another, at ſuch a rate; we may eaſily gueſs what ſort of Perſons they will make ſport for, and what the conſequences of ſuch kind of doing will be.*

And that we may not help to deſtroy our ſelves (when we have ſo many Enemies that are ſeeking our ruine) we ſhould deeply conſider, that the Spirit which dwelleth in us luſteth to Envy, and that the beſt, and wiſeſt of all, are but Men, ſubject to many paſſions, failings, and infirmities: and we ſhould often remember, what the Scriptures of truth do witneſs concerning thoſe who would be accounted the wiſeſt, when their Wit and Wiſdom proceeds not from the Spirit of Wiſdom, or deſcendeth not from above, 1 Cor. 3. 19, 20, 21. *and* Jam. 3. 13, 14, 15, 16. *And knowing the manifold diſtempers of the late*

times,

times, and under what different prejudices Persons have been bred up, it is great injustice for men to be over-severe in censuring and judging one another; and if we can but agree in all the parts of our present Constitution, according to our Oaths and Subscriptions, that should be enough to make us all Friends; and should be accounted the only sure bond of Unity, that is fit and able to hold us together: and if all can be brought, by gentle methods, to be conformable to the Rules of the Church, and to submit their Doctrines to the Judgment of their Superiours (as every sound Member of a true Church ought to do) all Names of distinction, amongst our selves, should be wholly laid aside. And seeing the Sentiments of Men are (and ever will be) various, according to the several prejudices they have imbib'd, in a distracted time; and finding the nature of Mankind is so frail and touchy, 'tis greatly to be hoped, that the Reverend Fathers of the Church will shew themselves to be Persons of so much Wisdom and Goodness, as to treat their Children, of all sorts, with extraordinary tenderness and discretion: and that they will, by the properest means, endeavour to let them see, they really aim to do them all good: though in a divided state of things, 'tis impossible every body can have his own humour. And they that are Superiours in the Church, in any kind, and in a flourishing Condition, should ever have a feeling Compassion for their Brethren, who are on the suffering side, or in a lower station, and are toiling under meaner circumstances; and this would be a right means to encourage them under their difficulties, to make them diligent and useful in their stations, and truly observant of all their fair and Canonical Injunctions; and whatsoever discontents and sufferings some of our worthy Brethren may be under, at present, yet 'tis to be hoped, they will be so just and wise, as not to break out into any further divisions:

visions: but that they will rather set their hands to help, as fast as they can, to heal those wounds, and make up those breaches, that have already caused so much pain and grief, and that have let in so many mischiefs upon us. And it is infinitely to be desired, that all sorts of Persons, who have any love for God and true Religion left in their hearts, would lay aside all kind of bitterness, animosity, and factiousness of Spirit; and that they would seriously, and candidly, apply their minds to think upon, and actually to pursue, such things as make for Peace, and for the real edifying of the Church, bettering themselves, and mending of the whole World. And for our Dissenters of every denomination, though we extend our Charity never so much; yet we can look on them as none other, than the broken Remains and Off-springs of the most manifest Schism that ever happen'd in any Church; and if we view them as they stand divided into their different Sects, and with their oppositions one against another, 'twill evidently appear, they are as meer a Babel, as ever the Christian World beheld. But nevertheless, when we seriously call to our minds, how and in what times they began, and encreased, in what manner they have been managed, what Scandals have been given them, and how hard a thing 'tis for the best and wisest of men to put off the inveterate prejudices of their Education, &c. We must needs grant many of them to be persons of very honest and good meaning; and therefore real objects of great pity and Compassion.

And I am verily perswaded, that were so learned, formed, and every way so considerable a body, as the Clergy of the Church of England *are, but so well united as they might be; and could be brought to act together, in some measure, in their several trusts, according to the design of the following Discourse; not only the Papists would be greatly dis-*

couraged,

couraged, from making farther attempts upon us; but also by this means (together with such gentle and prudent Methods as our Governours should think fit to make use of) the Eyes of the best and wisest of our Dissenters might be opened, and many of them would be reduced to the unity of the Church.

I am yet more particularly to address my self to you, my Reverend Neighbours! before I put an end to this Preface, but I shall not do it, either in bestowing formal Compliments upon you, or in making long Apologies for my self; and that for reasons which we all know. But what I shall freely say to you in short, is this, viz. *That if what I here publish to the World (chiefly at your request, and upon your Encouragement) shall be thought a needless troubling of my Brethren with what they all knew already, or if it shall happen to meet with spiteful Enemies, who shall load it, and the Author too, with Calumnies and reproaches for his good will (as 'tis seldom that Discourses tending to Peace and Reformation, do meet with better Fortune) then, you (as Accessaries) will in Conscience and Honour stand obliged to bear part of the blame, and will be ready, I hope, to ward off some of the strokes, that they fall not too heavily on the principal Actors head.*

But on the contrary, if it should chance, that this Discourse should be read by many of my Worthy Brethren, with the same Candor with which you were pleased to hear it, and judge of it; and so might, by God's blessing, prove never so little serviceable to the good ends, the Author sincerely aimed at in its composure and delivery; then will you have a just Claim to your share in so blessed a Work. And whatsoever a divided, selfish, and Censorious Generation may now think, yet the time is shortly coming, when five words spoken in, and for the Peace and Unity of the Church, and with a truly charitable Spirit,

for

for the reformation of what is amiſs in all ſorts of men, ſhall ſtand us in more ſtead, than ten thouſand words delivered in a contentious manner, and for the upholding any kind of faction, looſeneſs, or diſorder.

Finally, I do beg, that your Prayers may go along with what you ſend forth, and that you would ſeriouſly ſay, The Lord proſper it, and we wiſh it good luck in the Name of the Lord. Wherein you will alſo join with

Your Loving Brother,

and humble Servant,

Sam. Saywell.

Concio ad Clerum.

A

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Preach'd to the

CLERGY, *&c.*

Phil. II. 21.

For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſts.

IT appears from the two Verſes immediately foregoing, and from that which follows juſt after theſe words, that the Great Apoſtle utters this Complaint of ſome of the Clergy of his time; and chiefly of thoſe, who were his own Fellow-Labourers in the work of the Goſpel. For 'tis with the reſpect unto the ſpecial faithfulneſs, and like-mindedneſs of *Timothy* with himſelf, and by way of reproving and cenſuring the reſt, who were then about him; that St. *Paul* delivers theſe words which I have choſen for my Text. But it muſt not be imagined, that he wrote them raſhly, or uncharitably;

either not well considering what he said, or with a design to vilifie, or unjustly to accuse any of his Brethren (and God forbid, that the least uncharitable thought towards any of his Brethren, should harbour in the mind of him who is now about to handle them.) For the right taking of the Apostle therefore in this place, it must be considered, that Men who are extreamly zealous themselves in a Cause of great Consequence, are ready to look on others (whom they observe to be less affected in the same concern) to be little better than Neutralists, or Luke-warm Persons: And thus it appears, that St. *Paul* was himself carried on with such a constant burning zeal for the glory of his Master Christ Jesus, that he lookt on the generality of his Fellow-Labourers, in the work of the Ministry, to be but a Worldly and carnal sort of Gospellers. For though their business lay chiefly about spiritual and Heavenly matters, yet, he found, their thoughts were too much employed about Earthly, Worldly, and transitory concerns: and when their Profession led and obliged them to mind, especially, the things whereby the glory of Christs Kingdom might be promoted, and the Souls of Men Eternally saved; he saw they aimed more than they should have done, at such things as, they thought, might advance their own security, ease, and present advantage in this World. So that 'tis not by way of accusing them of Crimes, or Condemning their Persons, but only to the diminishing the zeal of some of his Brethren, that St. *Paul* utters the words of the Text saying, *For all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.* I shall not spend my time in shewing, what is here meant by our own things, and what by the things of Jesus Christ, it being sufficiently obvious, that by the former are meant such matters,

matters, as relate only to our natural and temporal good; and by the latter, ſuch things as are of a ſpiritual nature, and which relate unto Chriſt's Eternal Kingdom: But from the words I ſhall obſerve theſe three general matters.

Firſt, The exceeding great zeal of St. *Paul* above that of the reſt of his Brethren; for he was, I ſay, ſo wholly ſwallowed up with the Love of his Maſter, and his mind was ſo conſtantly fixed to do him honour and ſervice, that the generality of his Fellow-Labourers appeared, to his apprehenſion, little better than carnal Worldlings and Self-ſeekers; for he here ſaith of them, *all ſeek their own.*

Secondly, We may hence obſerve, That even in the Primitive Times of all, there was much want of Zeal, and great defects and infirmities amongſt the Clergy themſelves; or elſe the Apoſtle could not have ſaid of them as he doth in the Text.

Thirdly and laſtly, That 'tis, certainly, the ſpecial buſineſs of the Clergy, to ſeek the things of Jeſus Chriſt in the firſt place, and above all other matters that may be called their own; otherwiſe, the Apoſtle could not have blamed his Brethren for not doing ſo. Of theſe three General heads I intend to ſpeak at this time. And Firſt of St. *Paul*'s exceeding great Zeal above the reſt of his Brethren.

And this, I know, is a ſubject large enough of it ſelf to take up all my time, if I ſhould aim to proſecute it in its full extent; but I ſhall ſpeak of it chiefly with reſpect to the matter in hand; and only ſo far as may be agreeable with my preſent purpoſe: and I take it for a groſs miſtake, and an Errour of manifold ill Conſequence (which yet prevails amongſt all ſorts of our Modern Diſſenters) that St. *Paul* is not Eminently diſtinguiſhed

diſtinguiſhed from almoſt all other Miniſters of Chriſt whatſoever; not only for his Extraordinary gifts and endowments, but alſo for his ſingular Zeal, for the glory of Chriſt and high degrees of perfection in all manner of ſelf-denyal, Chriſtian charity, and holyneſs of life. And I queſtion, whether any meer Man in the World ever arrived to ſuch heights of Chriſtian perfection, in every reſpect, as he did: Neither are others obliged, by any precept of the Goſpel, to imitate his Example in ſeveral caſes.

As in his Preaching the Goſpel *gratis* to the *Corinthians* (for he did not do it in all other places) and his labouring with his own hands, that he might not be chargable to any of them; which was a peculiar piece of ſelf-denyal in him, and a voluntary offering, which he humbly gloryed in, and expected in a ſpecial manner to be rewarded for it. I might add to this, his living a Virgin all his days, as 'tis commonly believ'd he did, but was not bound to do. And alſo, That when he was one of the freeſt men in the World, he made himſelf ſervant unto all: and theſe things he did out of an overplus of Zeal for his Maſters ſervice; and that he might not give the leaſt offence, or ſuſpicion of offence, to any in the diſcharge of his Miniſtry, as may appear to him that reads the 9*th Chapt.* of his firſt *Epiſt.* to the *Corinthians*; and if we conſider his life and behaviour a little more particularly, and with reſpect to what he ſaith here in the Text; we ſhall find, that he ſought not his own things, but thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, in every inſtance that can be named.

For 'tis plain, he ſought not his own Worldly intereſt, being perfectly Crucified unto the World; and he counted all things in it but as dung, when they

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ſtood in Competition with his duty to God, or might be the leaſt hinderance to him in the winning of Chriſt.

He ſought not his own eaſe, *for he was in continual travels, watchings, and labours of many kinds; he laboured more abundantly than they all*, i. e. more than any one of the moſt Zealous of Chriſts Apoſtles; he ſought *not his own honour or greatneſs, for he perfectly knew how to be abaſed*, and did actually humble and debaſe himſelf to the meaneſt diſpenſations, of travelling up and down on foot, and working for a livelyhood ſometimes with his own hands; and he was ſo far from domineering over any, that he voluntarily made himſelf a Servant unto all, that he might win the more unto Chriſt; and he was ſo free from revenge, and retaliating injuries, that he tells us, *he would very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for thoſe that dealt moſt ungratefully by him; and though the more abundantly he loved them, the leſs he were loved of them*, 2 Cor. 12. 15. and 'tis moſt manifeſt, that he ſought not his own temporal ſecurity; for he moſt readily expoſed himſelf to all manner of dangers and hardſhips for Chriſts ſake; witneſs, his own long Catalogue of perils and ſufferings, 2 *Cor* 11. Nay, he was ſo far from refuſing any ſort of difficulties and hardſhips for the promoting of Chriſts Kingdom; that he ſaith he took pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſts ſake, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. and when he was ſure, that bonds and afflictions waited for him in every place, *he tells the Elders of Epheſus*, Act. 20. 24. that *none of thoſe things moved him*; *neither*, ſaith he, *count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the Miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus to teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God.* His

His Mind was perfectly bent on pleasing his Heavenly Master, and profiting of his Church on Earth, and he never seemed easy, when the work of his Ministry met with any lets or impediments, till he himself had used his best endeavours to remove them out of the way. And he was so absolutely free from seeking to please himself, and from minding his own things, that he spent himself wholly in labouring to please God, and the members of his Church; as he saith, 1 Cor. 10. 33. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* So that, if ever any one perfectly fullfilled that most heroical Exhortation, which he gives to all Christians, *Rom.* 15. 2. 'twas he himself, *viz.* That every one should please his Neighbour for his good to Edification.

And he not only continually acted and suffered himself for the honour of God, and the good of his Church; but he seemed likewise perfectly to sympathize with all the members of it, in their joys and sufferings, for he rejoiced with them that did rejoyce, as may be seen in several places of his Epistles, and he did as constantly suffer with those that suffered; and therefore could truly say, as he does 2 Cor. 11. 29. *who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* I shall only add that which goes just before, his daily care of all the Churches. Now on these accounts, I look on St. *Paul* to have been the most absolute pattern of all kind of spiritual Wisdom, Piety, and Holyness, both to Pastour and People, that ever lived in the World; and he did as far exceed the generality of others, in all heights of Christian perfection, and spiritual stature, as *Saul* did the rest of the People, in the eminent stature and height of his Body.

And

And from this exceſſive Zeal, and all kind of matchleſs perfection that was in St. *Paul*, I ſhall only obſerve theſe two things, briefly:

1. The great preſumption, and unjudicious, and injurious raſhneſs of our Diſſenters; in that they are ready for every trifle, to compare their Teachers with St. *Paul*, and to think them, and themſelves alſo, to be like unto, and equal with him; and in their blaming and cenſuring the Regular Clergy of the Church, if they come not up, in their Opinion, to all his heights in every inſtance; and by this groſs miſtake, and their not diſtinguiſhing exactly between Perſons and Perſons; times, places, and other different circumſtances of men and things, their Teachers conſtantly make great advantage to themſelves, amongſt weak and unwary people.

2. It ſhould ever be remembred, that St. *Paul* is ſet forth in God's word, and eſpecially by his own Writings, as a moſt Compleat Exemplar, under Chriſt himſelf, to all orders and degrees of Chriſtians; ſhewing them, not what they are all bound to be, on peril of loſing their Salvation, but what they ſhould aim to be, if they would endeavour to be conſummate in all manner of Holyneſs and Chriſtian Perfection, as he was.

And though, it may be exceedingly advantegeous to us all, on many accounts, to be often looking at ſo Excellent a Copy, as St. *Paul* appears to have been, in every reſpect, yet 'tis much to be queſtioned, whether ever any one, ſince his time, has been able to equal ſo exact an Original: But, 'tis certain, that the generality both of Paſtours and People, have in all times, come extreamly ſhort of doing this; which brings me to the ſecond general drawn from the Text,

viz. That even in the primitive times of all, there was much want of true Zeal, and great defects and infirmities amongſt the Clergy themſelves, or elſe the Apoſtle could not have ſaid, as in the words before us, *for all ſeek their own, not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.*

I know, that all good men have ever been apt to think their own times the worſt, and that there had never been ſo great corruption of doctrines, and manners, as in their days. But the wiſe man hath taught us, long ſince, not to ſay, *what is the cauſe that the former days were better than theſe*, for ſaith he, *thou doſt not wiſely enquire concerning this.* Therefore we muſt aſſure our ſelves, that though ſome times have, doubtleſs, been better than others, for the flouriſhing of true Religion and Virtue; yet that all times have had their ſeveral evils and diſadvantages; ſome in one kind, and ſome in another, as might eaſily be ſhewn were we to take a particular view of every Age. But I ſhall confine my ſelf chiefly to the times of the Apoſtles: And 'tis manifeſt enough from their own Writings, that they had not only to do with Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, who laboured to undermine and overthrow their fundamental Doctrines, and to break that exact order and holy diſcipline, which they eſtabliſhed in the Church; but even in thoſe firſt times of all, there were Carnal-minded, proud, and ſelf-ſeeking perſons admitted into the Miniſtry, as well as into the Church: For if *Simon Magus* could deceive St. *Peter* by his Hypocritical pretences, to the gaining admittance into the Church by Baptiſm; well might others do the like, even to the getting into the ſacred Miniſtry it ſelf: and ſome of theſe proved turbulent Hereticks and Schiſmaticks,

according

according to St. *Paul*'s Prediction to the Biſhops met together at *Miletus*, Act. 20.30, where he ſaith, *alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things to draw away Diſciples after them.* Theſe were ſuch as chiefly ſought their own glory, and other worldly and bye-ends, which they had upon the perſons whom they taught, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.

Others were only luke-warm and cowardly Profeſſors, who brought little profit or credit to the cauſe of Chriſt, they were ſo nearly concerned in: for 'tis very evident, there were great defects and failings among thoſe that held the Fundamentals, and abode in the unity of the Church, thus it appears, that ſome of them built only wood, hay, and ſtubble upon the foundation of Chriſt Jeſus, as the Apoſtle intimates, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12. *i. e.* very ſlight, phantaſtical, and unedifying doctrines, ſuch as would not endure the fiery tryal of Gods ſevere judgment, that ſhall paſs on doctrines as well as manners at the laſt day: and ſome there were which preached Chriſt of envy and ſtrife, and not with that true ſincerity of heart, as is required in every faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel *Phil.* 1. 15, 16. Theſe, I believe, were neither Hereticks, nor Schiſmaticks, for then St. *Paul* could not have rejoiced in their preaching, as he tells us he did, *v.* 18. but, I take it, that they were Carnal and vain-glorious perſons, and ſuch who envyed the gifts and fame of St. *Paul*, and thought to take advantage of his Impriſonment, to make themſelves the more conſiderable in the Church; and ſome of the miraculouſly gifted teachers at *Corinth* ſeemed to aim more at their own glory than at the good of the Church, and edifying of their hearers; as may be conjectured from their delighting to ſpeak in an unknown tongue, 1 *Cor.*

14. And I am apt to think that *Apollos* himſelf (though he were a good Man) was almoſt tired out with the factious and untoward behaviour of the *Corinthians*; for we find, he was not at all willing to come at them, when St. *Paul* greatly deſired him ſo to do, 1 *Cor.* 16. 12. and St. *Paul* was ſo offended with *John Mark* for leaving of them (I ſuppoſe in a time of need and danger) that he did not care to make him his Companion, in the work of the Miniſtry any more, which occaſioned that ſharp contention and diviſion, which happened betwixt St. *Barnabas* and him that we read of, *Act.* 15. 39. and *Demas* quite forſook his Miniſtry, for the love of this preſent World, 2 *Tim* 4. 10. we read alſo, that there were ſome defects in moſt of the ſeven Angels, *i. e.* the ſeven Biſhops of the ſeven Churches in *Aſia*, *Rev. Chap.* 2. 3. and very groſs failings in thoſe two of *Sardis*, and *Laodicea*. But that which is moſt ſtrange of all is, That this very *Timothy*, whom St. *Paul* makes his ſpecial exception in this place, is generally ſuppoſed to be the perſon whom Chriſt himſelf writes to, and reproves by St. *John*, for having forſaken his firſt love, *Rev.* 2. 1. for the Hiſtorians do moſtly agree, and 'tis highly probable, that he was Biſhop of *Epheſus* at that time; and when he is cenſured for forſaking his firſt love, the meaning is not, that he had quite loſt his Charity and love to Chriſt; but that he had abated of his firſt Zeal for his honour, through the manifold temptations, great difficulties, and dangers he met with in the diſcharge of his office: which is not a thing unlikely to happen to a perſon of ſo great virtue and holyneſs as he was.

But now if this were ſo (as we have great reaſon to believe) it ſhould be a matter of ſpecial conſidera-

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tion, and admonition, to all the Biſhops and Paſtours of Chriſts Church throughout all Generations; for then it will follow, that this very holy *Timothy* himſelf (whom St. *Paul* here ſo highly commends, and diſtinguiſheth) did afterward, in ſome meaſure, fall under the ſame cenſure with the reſt; and that he did, more than was fitting, *ſeek his own, not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.*

And if together with the ſubtlety of our ſpiritual Enemies, we conſider the ſtrange moveableneſs, deceitfulneſs and inconſtancy of Mans nature; and the many unexpected difficulties, ſurprizing, accidents, and temptations, he is continually ſubject to, while he is in this World; and that our moſt natural inclinations, are Enemies to us when we are in the greateſt danger; It will not be thought extreamly marvellous, if the beſt and holyeſt of men ſhould degenerate by degrees, or fall ſuddenly, from a ſtate of ſome eminency and perfection in holyneſs. But then it muſt be remembred, that ſuch as theſe, are in a greater likelyhood than others, to repent and recover themſelves again, upon ſome ſpecial admonition or other: and therefore we have no reaſon to queſtion, but that Biſhop *Timothy* did return to his former love and zeal for Chriſt, upon the reproof that was given him.

'Twould be too tedious to mention the many Complaints that are made by God himſelf, and the great failings that are recorded in his word, of the Prieſts under the law, and 'twould be endleſs and nauſeous, to reckon up the defects and miſcarriages of the Biſhops and Governours of the Church that are to be found in the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians. Grievous likewiſe are the complaints that are made of the Clergy of their own times by ſuch holy men as St. *Chryſoſtom*, St.

S. *Salvian*, *Gregory* the Great, St. *Bernard*, *Petrarch*, and many others.

And there is nothing more remarkable of this kind, than what we meet with in the little work of our own Countryman *Gildas*; for 'tis a most dismal account that he gives of the Corruption of the British Clergy, a little before this Island was over-run and destroyed by the *Saxons*.

But I shall wave all these, and such like ungrateful matters, and proceed to make but two Observations from what hath been already said on this second general.

1. We may hence observe, how very apt Mans Nature is to degenerate and swerve from the ways of God, and how difficult a matter 'tis for us constantly and duly to attend to spiritual things, *i. e.* to the things of Jesus Christ.

And if there were no other Arguments to prove the corruption of humane nature, yet the very observing, how constantly all Orders and Societies of Men, are apt to fall away from the wise and pious Laws, and strict Rules given them by their first Formers and Founders, is enough to convince us of it: and the Bodies of Men are scarce more apt to corrupt and turn noysome, after their Souls are departed from them, than their minds are to alter and be corrupted, if they are not carefully watched and continually seasoned with God's grace. But the grace of God is not to be obtained, but by the use of such means as are proper to cultivate our Souls, and to preserve and renew the spirit of God in them. Hence appears the necessity of reading, hearing, meditating, and taking an account of our own actions, inward as well as outward; the frequent and serious confession

confeſſion of our Sins, conſtant Prayers, and the often renewing of our Covenant with God in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For by the frequent and due uſe of ſuch holy Exerciſes as theſe, the Souls of Men are ſeaſon'd with God's Spirit, as all the Sacrifices were to be ſeaſoned with Salt under the Law, *Lev.* 2. 13. and by the due uſe of theſe means we ſhall always have ſpiritual Salt in our ſelves, as Chriſt admoniſheth us of the Clergy eſpecially to have, *Mar.* 9. 50. and we ſhall be able to preſent our Souls and Bodies as ſound and living Sacrifices, which are the reaſonable ſervices which God now requires of us under the Goſpel, *Rom.* 12. 1. and all our actions and ſpeeches will become ſound and ſavoury, according to the Apoſtles advice, *Col.* 4. 6. and *Tit.* 2. 8.

But if theſe Exerciſes be performed after a dead, careleſs, and lifeleſs manner, they will be but like dead ſalt neither, that hath loſt its ſaltneſs; and they will not afford Virtue enough to ſeaſon our ſelves and our own ſervices, much leſs will they fit us to ſeaſon others.

Therefore it ſhould ever be remembred, that we are, every way, and on all accounts, ſo lyable to degenerate, and to be corrupted, without a continual and ſtrict watch over our ſelves; that, even thoſe which ſhould be our beſt and choiceſt ſervices, may be ſo far from being acceptable to God, that they may *become offenſive and loathſome to him.*

And we muſt ever take it for an undoubted truth, that the graces of God's holy Spirit, ſuch as Faith, Hope, and Charity, do not naturally breed in, or grow up out of the hearts of men; but that the ſeeds of them muſt firſt be ſown by God's Husbandry, and that they muſt be continually cheriſhed and watered

watered by Man's Care and Induſtry, together with the continued influence of God's Spirit, which he is always ready to give to ſuch as rightly uſe the means, that he hath appointed; and made proper to thoſe purpoſes. Nay, the mind of Man is not only born a ſtranger to all ſpiritual objects, and divine Revelations, but there is alſo in us, by nature, a great averſeneſs to all ſuch holy diſpoſitions, from whence the habits of Chriſtian Graces are to ariſe; and by which Chriſt is to be formed in us, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks.

And therefore 'tis no wonder, if the work of a Chriſtian be repreſented in holy Scripture, as a hard and difficult work; and that we are therein commanded and exhorted, to watch, to run, to fight, to ſtrive, to give all diligence, to contend earneſtly, to uſe violence, to take diligent heed, to walk circumſpectly, to do all that in us lies, to take to our ſelves the whole Armour of God, that we may ſtand to, and acquit our ſelves like Men, in the great work we took upon us at our Baptiſm.

And Men have ever found, That the ſlipping into any ſinful or evil habit, is eaſy and natural to them; 'tis like ſliding down the Hill, and ſwimming with the ſtream: But the attaining any new degree of Grace, and the encreaſing in any habit of Piety, doth require our ſpecial care, pains, and watchfullneſs.

Now, hence we may all be ſenſible of the difficulty, of duly and conſtantly minding the things of Jeſus Chriſt: and that 'tis no ſtrange thing to ſee good men to fail, and to come ſhort of their beſt purpoſes and reſolutions: Becauſe 'tis hard for them to attend ſtedfaſtly, at all times, to ſuch things as are irkſom and oppoſite to their ſtrongeſt natural inclinations.

clinations. For Men must have something or other to please and delight themselves in, or else they cannot be easy or happy in any measure. Therefore till persons can arrive to such a pitch of Religion and Piety, as to take delight and pleasure in the Exercises of it, it must needs be difficult to them; and they will so long be in immediate danger of degenerating from their holy Calling and Profession. Nay, of falling into grievous Sins, and carelessness of living.

Therefore till our hearts be loosen'd, and pretty well weaned from all the things that can be enjoyed in this life; and until we have escaped the corruption that is in the World, through the lust after worldly things, as St. *Peter* hath it; and till we are delivered from the inordinate love of whatsoever is in the World, as St. *John* expresseth it; and till, with St. *Paul*, we can count all things here, as dung, that we may win Christ, we shall not be able so duly and stedfastly to mind and seek the things of Jesus Christ as we ought to do.

2. Considering this exceeding great difficulty of always preserving so exact an innocency, so fervent a zeal, and so prudent a deportment in all respects, as could be wished for in every Minister of Christ; and remembring, that there were great failings and defects amongst the Clergy, even in the Primitive Times of all; The World should learn to make allowances unto them, and to overlook their failings as they do those of other men. For they are made up of the same flesh and blood, and are Men of like Passions with others. They have the same lusts and corruptions to fight against, that other Men have, and therefore it must not be thought strange, if they are Conquered sometimes, though their business be to

lead and teach others how to fight. For, you know, the Commanders and Captains are often Conquer'd and ſlain, as well as the Souldiers of common rank. The Prieſthood was never exempted from the fatal diſaſters that befal men in the ſpiritual Warfare, nor was it ever able to preſerve thoſe that bore it from every moral blemiſh: Though no one of the Seed of *Aaron*, who had any obvious defect or blemiſh in his body, was capable of the exerciſe of it under the Law, *Lev.* 21. We all know, what that Law aimed at, and what it was to ſignifie to us: But however, in the event, it was but like the reſt of God's moſt perfect Laws, rather ſhewing men what they ought to be, than what they really are, or ever have generally been.

And ſeeing by the experience of all Ages, it cannot be hoped, that any order, or ſmall Society of Men will continue long in this World, without their remarkable defects and failings; it is therefore great injuſtice, to beſpatter and deride whole Orders and Bodies of Men, on the account of the perſonal miſcarriages of ſome particular Members; and from the faults of ſome Miniſters and Inſtruments of Religion, to argue againſt and condemn Religion it ſelf. But they are commonly bad Logicians, and worſe Moraliſts, that make uſe of this, and ſuch like Arguments, againſt our holy Profeſſion.

And it ſhould eſpecially be remembred, that the circumſtances of the Clergy in our days, are vaſtly different from theirs in the Primitive Times. For they were to travel from place to place; and we are fixed to our ſtations. They had their maintenance provided for them quietly, by the Charitable Care and Piety of the Church: whereas we have to do with

with many untoward and unreaſonable Men for the procuring of ours. The very firſt Preachers had not Families about them to burthen and diſtract them, as they, more generally, have had, who have lived in the ſetled times of the Church. They had to do with thoſe that dreaded their ſpiritual Authority, and highly reverenced and valued their ſacred Functions; we have to deal with many ſuch as little regard the holyneſs of our Office, or the infinite benefits that may accrew unto them by our Miniſtry, or the dreadful Cenſures which Chriſt hath empowred his Deputies on Earth, on good occaſion to denounce againſt them. They had their Divine Wiſdom and Knowledge in the Myſteries of the Goſpel, immediately taught them, by the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt: and we gain ours only by the ordinary bleſſing of God upon our hard ſtudies, Prayers, and tedious Meditations. In their days the zeal of the Church was freſh, fervent, and burning: whereas we live in the latter and perillous times, wherein the love of many is waxen luke-warm, and cold; and when Men are become lovers of themſelves more than lovers of God. In thoſe days both Paſtours and People did generally profeſs the Chriſtian Religion out of Choice, love to God, and Principles of Conſcience; but, now, 'tis to be feared, too many may do it out of Cuſtom, and Intereſt, and meerly in complyance with the faſhions of the World. Then the Paſtours and Miniſters of the Church were choſen for their extraordinary gifts and zeal above others: Now, (through the Corruptions that creep into the Church by little and little) they are too frequently put in, not for their worth, but according to the Intereſt and Friends they can make amongſt

the great Men of the World, be they better or worse.

They were to deal with a select Company of Persons, who were nearly and deeply concerned for the honour of their Lord, and the success of his Ministers labours: But now, we (since the World is come into the Church, especially in the loose state of affairs that we are at present in) have to deal with a multitude of formal Professors of the Christian Faith, whereof few have a sincere Zeal for the thriving of it, and many are secret Enemies to the Establishing of it in its greatest perfection. And they who do not consider these and such differences between the circumstances of the Clergy in the Apostles times, and ours, in these days; can never pass an equal judgment either of them or us. For we are not bound to undergo many of their difficulties and hardships: Neither were they lyable to several of our temptations and inconveniencies. We are not tyed to do divers Things, which they did; nor were they bound to some things, which are expected from us. And to conclude this point, if they who had so great advantages to keep up their Zeal, were yet too apt to mind their own things, before the things of Jesus Christ; it must not be thought strange if too many of us are ready to do the like; though it must ever be acknowledged, that they then, and all we now, who have taken the sacred fountain upon us, are bound to seek the things of Jesus Christ, in the first place, and before all other matters, which may be called our own. which was the third thing I have undertaken to speak unto from the Text.

And, indeed, nothing should raise our thoughts more from Earth to Heaven, and fix them upon the

business

buſineſs we have in hand; than the ſerious and frequent conſideration of the admirable ends of our office, and the eternal excellency of the things we are employed about. For we are entruſted to carry on that work for which this whole Univerſe was made, and that hath exerciſed the infinite wiſdom of God to contrive. All other Sciences, Arts, and Profeſſions reſpect only the good of this life, whereas ours immediately concerns that Life, which is to laſt to Eternal Ages. All the effects and fruits of other mens labours, I mean, as they are meerly the products of their humane skill and induſtry, ſhall periſh with this World; whereas the fruits of our labours and adminiſtrations, ſhall continue when time ſhall be no more. We are inſtruments to put in Execution the reſolutions of the Eternal Counſels of Heaven; and are ſet to keep up a lively ſenſe of ſuch truths, and to promote ſuch manners amongſt men, as the Son of God himſelf came down from Heaven to teach them. And the things of Jeſus Chriſt, which we are to ſeek after, and ſet forward all we can, do immediately relate to the Honour of the King of Heaven, and, to the true and only happineſs of Mankind.

And 'tis impoſſible, that Mans Care, Wit, or Faithfulneſs, can be employed, in this life, about matters of a higher nature, or of greater worth than theſe. For as Chriſt Jeſus is deputed by the Father, to execute, in due time, the Eternal Counſels of his Will; concerning the Life or Death, Happyneſs or Miſery of Mankind, ſo are the Biſhops and Paſtours of his Church his Commiſſion-officers, for the carrying on of that work. And therefore in the proſpering or miſcarrying of it, the eternal fates of mens immortal Souls are involved. And the Apoſtle tells us,

they

they are to be accounted, as Embaſſadours for Chriſt, and that to them is committed the word of reconciliation; and therefore according as men receive or reject thoſe offers of mercy and favour with himſelf, which God tendereth to them by their Miniſtry; ſo are they like to find peace with him in his Heavenly Kingdom, or to be rejected from it.

Now, I ſay, the conſideration of the nearneſs of our relation unto Chriſt, and the infinite concernment of the work we are employed about, ſhould quicken and exalt our Zeal far above that of Ordinary Chriſtians. For, who ſhould be ſo much concerned for the honour of the King of Heaven, as they whom he hath ſent forth to be his Embaſſadours to his People on Earth? And if the Shepherds, who are ſet on purpoſe to watch for the good and ſecurity of the Flock, be negligent of their Charge, it will not be thought ſtrange, if it fare ill with the Sheep; or if many of them ſhould go aſtray, or be loſt.

And if the Stewards of the Houſhold give themſelves over to rioting, careleſsneſs, or any diſorderly behaviour, it cannot be hoped, that the Family ſhould be found according to their Maſters liking, at his return. The Miniſters of Chriſt are termed likewiſe Watchmen, Seers, Overſeers, Biſhops, Angels, *&c.* becauſe of the careful Eye they are always to bear over his Church, and for that they ſhould be, as it were, his Guardian Angels on Earth, to watch for the good of his People. And all the Names which are given them in God's word, do beſpeak them, not only to be Perſons of honour, but alſo Men of buſineſs and cares, and ſuch, as have a great charge upon their hands, and ſo heavy an *Onus* upon their ſhoulders, as is, (according to the known ſaying of St.

St. *Jerom*) even, *humeris Angelorum formidandum.* Though therefore they are not debarr'd from any innocent recreations, yet they ought not to wrap themſelves up in eaſe and idleneſs, nor to lead careleſs and uſeleſs lives; much leſs are they to give themſelves over to the extravagant pleaſures, or looſe divertiſements of this World. For they ſhould remember, that their buſineſs and duty is, not only to teach Men the will of God, and open to them the mind of Chriſt, and the Myſteries of his Goſpel, but alſo, and eſpecially, to be Patterns to their Flocks in every good work; and to lead and encourage them, by their Examples, to all holy Converſation and Godlineſs. They ſhould be burning, ſhining, and ſteady Lights, to guide others ſecurely, through the dark paſſage of this Life; that their Eyes be not dazled by the many *ignes fatui*, or falſe Lights, which the Devil is ever trimming up, and ſetting forth, to the diſtracting and confounding the weaker Members of the Church. And becauſe God's People are commanded to hear, to imitate, mark, obey, and follow them; therefore they ought to be ſo wiſe and prudent in all their Commands and Injunctions; and ſo unblameable, charitable, and holy in all their behaviour, that their Flocks may readily be followers of them, as they are of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. And in order to the performing aright the charge they have taken upon them, 'tis highly requiſite, they ſhould have a real concern, and genuine care, for the good of all thoſe they are to teach and watch over. For, though it may not be neceſſary, that every Clergy-man ſhould be a conſtant Preacher, yet, I think, 'tis required of all, who have entered into holy Orders, that they ſhould ſome way or other be ſerviceable

able in the work they have taken in hand; and that they ſhould have a true zeal and earneſt deſire for the good of the Church, and for the Salvation of Mens Souls. And this is the ſpecial Commendation that St. *Paul* gives unto *Timothy*, above the reſt of his Fellow-Labourers, in the Verſe before the Text; That he was ἰσόψυχος, ὃς γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει, &c. That he was one like unto, and ſuitable to his own Soul, and who was genuinely ſollicitous for the *Philippians* ſpiritual concerns, and all who have taken *Curam Animarum* upon them, are bound to ſee, that their charges want not means of inſtruction in all neceſſary matters; and that all convenient opportunity may be offered, and all ſuitable means of ſerving God acceptably, may be provided for them. Therefore all that are committed to their Care, ſhould be frequently called upon, and put in remembrance of the fundamental points of their Chriſtian Duty; Every Article of the Faith, every one of the Ten Commandments, all the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, together with the Doctrine of the Holy Sacraments, are to be ſufficiently opened and explained. No material rule of our own Church ſhould be wholly unregarded; every Errour immediately dangerous ſhould be refuted. No groſs neglect of God's Ordinances, or reigning Vice, ſhould paſs unreproved; and I wiſh I could ſay no ſcandalous Offender ſhould eſcape without being made to undergo the publick Cenſures of the Church. And when we have thus ſincerely done all that, in reaſon, can be required of us, for the diſcharging of our duty; to the benefiting of our Church, and to the Salvation of their Souls in particular, which are committed to our own care; we may ſafely ſay, we have given the Sinner warning,

ing, and with St. *Paul*, That we are clear from the blood of all Men; and we may then comfortably commit the ſucceſs and event of our labours and endeavours to the bleſſing of God: And, as 'tis ſaid of Chriſt himſelf by the Prophet, ſo I doubt not, but it may be truly affirmed of his faithful Miniſters, according to their meaſure, *viz.* That, *though* Jacob *be not brought again, and* Iſrael *be not gathered, yet they ſhall be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and their God ſhall be their ſtrength*, Iſai. 49. 5. For though it can never be hoped, that all the outward Members of the Church ſhould be brought, in any meaſure, to live according to that exact order and holyneſs, which the Scripture aims at, and their duty obligeth them to; yet, 'tis not to be queſtioned, but Almighty God will be a ſhield, and exceeding great reward to them, who conſtantly pray, and ſincerely endeavour that they may be ſo. If therefore our work may appear extreamly difficult, and our diſcouragements many, great, and unſupportable; let us remember alſo, that the greatneſs and goodneſs of the Maſter, whom we ſerve, is beyond all compariſon; and the reward we may expect from him, in another life, is above all that can be expreſs'd. And if we are not reſolved in the firſt place, to ſeek the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, to lay up our treaſure in another World, and to expect the reward of our labours in Heaven, we ſhall not be fit to be God's Miniſters here on Earth; nor ſhall we ever be able to ſeek the things of Jeſus Chriſt, as we ought to do.

And now, I beſeech you to bear with me a little, and accept a word of admonition from the meaneſt of your Brethren, and he hath done. You all know, we live in a looſe, diſtracted, divided, and miſerably

diſtempered World; and we ſee alſo the ſtate of the Church to be ſadly confounded, broken, and polluted; and that our own Church and Nation in particular, have their ſhare in all thoſe evils and calamities, which Chriſtendom at preſent groaneth under. We have Enemies many, ſubtle, malicious, and powerful, threatning of us on every ſide; and theſe are conſiderations enough, I hope, to make us all extreamly circumſpect, watchful, and diligent in our ſeveral ſtations and capacities; and not to meddle with the ſtate. I think the preſervation of the beſt conſtituted Church in the Chriſtian World depends, at this time, on the unanimous Zeal, ſteadyneſs, and wiſdom of her Clergy. I do not ſpeak this, or any thing I have ſaid, or am about to ſay, as though I doubted, whether the Clergy of the Church of *England*, were not (generally ſpeaking) ſome of the moſt learned, beſt, and wiſeſt that are this day upon the Earth; but only that I think, 'twas never more neceſſary that they ſhould be ſuch; and becauſe I am extreamly deſirous, that whatſoever is a miſs, amongſt them, might be amended; and that they might abound more and more (as the Apoſtle often exhorteth) in whatſoever is good and commendable. The conſtitution of our Church hath been abundantly defended againſt all her adverſaries, and every cavil, that hath been raiſed againſt it, hath been fully anſwered by one worthy hand or other; I think, beyond all poſſibility of a material reply. Our Doctrine hath been proved to be truly ſound and Catholick, our Government undoubtedly Primitive and Apoſtolical, our Worſhip the pureſt, the moſt agreeable to the beſt ancient Liturgies, and therefore the moſt inoffenſive of any now uſed, or that has been uſed in any Age, or in any part of the Chriſtian

Christian Church. Our Discipline (though at present sadly fallen to the ground) is likewise, in the frame of it, the most agreeable to Scripture rules, and ancient usage, the most moderate, and upon all accounts, the most justifiable of any that can be named.

So that the whole Fabrick of our Church is made up of the soundest and most tryed Materials, and is as well put together as any particular Church in the Christian World. And all this has been made to appear if not to the Conviction, yet, in a manner, to the silencing of our Adversaries, on every side. And they now, all choose rather to attack us by wily tricks and politick entriegues, than by open force or dint of Argument. And the greatest advantage they have against us, and the main hopes that any of them have left, of gaining their ends upon us, lye chiefly in the looseness of our own Members, and in that flood of Irreligion and profaneness, which hath broken in upon us, through the cracks and rents which themselves have made; and do still help to keep open. For the divisions, which have been caused among us have made the goodly Fabrick of our Church to shake and shatter; and that want of Discipline, and profaneness which have entered in at the clefts do now moulder away the strength, utterly deface the outward beauty of it. For if a House be never so well built if it be not also well protected and carefully defended from the injuries of the weather and other annoyances it may quickly come to ruine. And if any thing can long preserve this Church from further decays, and heal the present wounds and *breaches of it*, in some measure it must be, *the Unanimity, the true Christian Zeal, and the prudence of the Clergy.* For to

ſay the truth, this Church hath never been rightly of a piece ſince the Reformation: and they were the different Sentiments among the Clergy, that drew on, and occaſioned, by degrees, the grievous diviſions, that we, at this time, lament and groan under. But, God be thanked, thoſe differences are pretty well worn off; and the Clergy are now generally well ſatisfied with the Conſtitution, and very much diſpoſed to be of one mind (bating the moſt unhappy breach, which hath lately happen'd amongſt us, and we ſhould do all we can to make it up again.) But 'tis their acting together unanimouſly in all reſpects, their teaching the ſame things, and their keeping ſtrictly to the ſame rules, which the Church hath given them to walk by, and which they are all equally bound to obſerve, that can make them ſtrong and impregnable, againſt all the aſſaults of their Enemies. For as the greater differences amongſt the Clergy drew after them thoſe moſt pernicious Schiſms and Hereſies, that are now ſo flagrant amongſt us; ſo the ſmaller differences in modes and manners of Adminiſtration, and almoſt any ſwerving from our common rules, do give ſome kind of ſecret wound unto the Church; and 'tis the perfect Unanimity and Uniformity of the Clergy, that muſt help to cure thoſe evils which have grown, I ſay, from the differences that firſt began among themſelves. For all men know, that what is done by common conſent, and by a unanimous agreement, carries ſtrength and authority with it; whereas any thing done of private motion, or by following irregular Examples, is ever liable to be cenſur'd and carpt at; and 'tis a ſad thing, when the very obſerving of the rules of the Church muſt be lookt upon as a ſingularity, and almoſt

moſt an occaſion of offence, and that meerly for want of that uniform acting, which our common duties oblige us unto. And it ſhould be eſpecially taken notice of, that we are to do all we can to make men ſenſible, what the Doctrine, Worſhip, Government, and Diſcipline of our Church really are (for not one in a hundred, either of our Diſſenters, or of our own Members, rightly underſtand our conſtitution) but this can never be done effectually, but by a conſtant and uniform repetition, and exerciſe of them: for, 'tis remarkable to obſerve, how ſuddenly Papiſts, and the Members of all other Parties among us, ſhall learn to know and give an account of the main points of Doctrine, manner of Worſhip, Government, and Diſcipline, as they are held and practiſed in their ſeveral ways; and yet very few of our common people rightly underſtand theſe things, as they are better taught and uſed in our Church. I have not time to tell all the reaſons of this difference, but 'tis certainly the reducing the main points of Religion to a narrow compaſs, and the frequent repetition and uniform practice of them, that muſt make common people underſtand ſo much of it as 'tis neceſſary for them to know. Unleſs therefore the Reverend Biſhops are Unanimous in directing the reſt of the Clergy in matters already eſtabliſhed (and watchful in guiding of them likewiſe in all Emergencies of moment) and they in teaching and directing of the people, this Church can never rightly thrive and proſper.

But the greateſt Unity and Uniformity, without a true Chriſtian Zeal in the Clergy alſo, can never make us a happy Church and People neither. For the holy fire muſt be always kept alive upon the Altar, and be ready to be fetcht from thence, or elſe the Sacrifices

crifices of God's People will be crudely and coldly offer'd; and they which are to ſeaſon others muſt have ſalt in themſelves, or elſe the Body of the Church will quickly prove unſavoury, and be ready to turn to Corruption. And the truth is, a Clergy-man without Zeal for carrying on the work he hath taken on him, is really one of the greateſt hinderers of it; and if they who are Miniſters and Officers in the Church, look more at the advantages and benefits that are annexed to their places, than to the good work that is expected from them, it makes the looſe World to think, their Calling is but a Trade to live by, like thoſe of others; and not a ſacred Function appointed by Chriſt himſelf, and neceſſary for the keeping up of true Religion and Virtue among Men, and for the winning of Souls to God. We ſhould remember, what Paſtours they are that love the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, even thoſe only that are careful to feed every part of his flock, as may be gathered from his own words, *Joh.* 21. 15, 16, 17. We are ſet to profit many to all Eternity, and 'twill be the worſt kind of Robbery in us, if we ſeek only to benefit our ſelves for a little time in this World. We are in the places of thoſe that ſhould be publick Benefactors and Bleſſings to Gods Church and People, and if we are not ſuch, we are injurious to God, to his Church, and perhaps, to thoſe that would be ſo; and it muſt not be thought ſtrange, if the People go about to rob God, and us too, of thoſe dues, which God himſelf, and our pious Anceſtours, gave for our Maintenance; if we rob them of that neceſſary inſtruction, thoſe conſtant Prayers, and good Examples which we owe unto them; and if we are not Careful and truly Zealous

for

for the Salvation of their Souls, that are committed to our care, 'twill not be wonder'd at, if they run away from us, and harken to thoſe, who take them chiefly by their Zeal; and which is, indeed, the moſt commendable quality that is in them; and we find, by ſad experience, that all we can do is little enough, and too little, to keep the Sheep within the fold. I do not aim, God knows, by any thing of this to lay a heavyer burthen on my brethrens ſhoulders than is there already; nor to deprive them of any liberty, that 'tis fit for Perſons of their Profeſſion to enjoy; much leſs, to debar them from taking a moderate care of their temporal concerns, and for the providing things honeſt and convenient for themſelves and Families; for I know, it highly behoves them to have an Eye unto theſe things; but it infinitely behoves them alſo, to manage their Worldly matters ſo, that they may be as ſmall a hinderance as 'tis poſſible, to their greater Spiritual Concerns. And when all is done, we ſhould conſider, that honeſty is the beſt policy, in all profeſſions, and the faithful diſcharge of our Offices, as we are the Miniſters of Chriſt, is the readyeſt way to win the favour of God and Man, and to bring temporal, as well as eternal bleſſings upon us, and ours: 'twas the ſingular Piety and Devotion of the Clergy, that firſt won ſo much Wealth unto the Church; and 'twas the Pride, Tyranny, Looſeneſs, and other defaults and neglects of ſome of their Succeſſors, that occaſioned the loſs of it again, and there is nothing but a true and unfeigned Chriſtian Zeal, that God throughly bleſſeth in all times and Ages; and if any thing do generally mend the temporal condition of the Clergy in this Land, it muſt be their Spiritual, and more univerſal Zeal for the bene-

fit

fit of thoſe that are committed to their care. And 'tis this alſo that muſt redeem us from that contempt that hath too viſibly fallen upon us of late years. I fear, 'tas been the want of this divine Spirit of Zeal for God's honour and the Salvation of his Peoples Souls, in too many of our Profeſſion, that hath occaſioned our reputation to ſink, and our calling to be meanly thought of, eſpecially by the viler ſort of Men. For we ſhould remember, that Chriſt our Elder Brother dyed, and is gone to Heaven, and that he hath left the care of his Spouſe the Church unto us his Miniſters, and he expects that we ſhould be zealous in raiſing up Children unto him, and to preſerve his name and honour in the World; Now, if we refuſe to do this, any of us, 'twill be but juſt, if ſhe, whom we ſhould have eſpouſed, do ſpit in our face, and our ſhooe be looſed, and we be marked with diſgrace, as *Moſes* hath myſtically taught us in the Law, *Deut.*25. and you know, Chriſt himſelf hath told us in the Goſpel, what that Salt is fit for that hath loſt its ſavour. So that our Intereſt, our Honour, and, I may ſay, all that ſhould be moſt near and dear unto us, and that concerns either this life or another, are bound up, in the ſincere and conſciencious diſcharge of the ſeral Offices we have taken upon us. And I believe, our good Examples, in all kind of Chriſtian Practice, are every whit as much, if not more neceſſary, than our good inſtructions; eſpecially in the Age we live in, wherein knowledge abounds, and good Books are every where to be met with; but truly good and pious Examples are very rare. We are bound by our places, Men think, to ſpeak and teach the beſt things; and if we do not put in practice whatſoever we teach, and preſs upon others, all are lookt upon

upon but as words of course: And indeed, if they come but from the tip of our own Tongues, we must never expect, they should sink deep down into other Mens Hearts; and with what face can we press every Christian duty upon other men, and endavour to plant in them every spiritual grace, if these are not first exemplified in our own lives, and deeply rooted in the bottom of our own Hearts? And how can we intercede with God for others, if we are not well reconciled to him, and do not constantly live in some good Friendship with him our selves? And in a word, we can perform no office with full acceptance to God, true comfort to our selves, or any great benefit to the Church, if we are not heartily Zealous for our Lord's honour and service. And now, though I owe much Apology for what I have said already, yet I can scarce forbear saying many things more on this Subject; but I must remember my time, who I am, and to whom I speak, I shall therefore proceed to say but a very few words more, touching the Prudence, which is likewise highly requisite in Persons of our Profession; I shall thankfully release you, and perfectly relieve your injured Patience.

We are all sensible, that Zeal without Knowledge is blind and dangerous, that 'tis like Fire out of its place, and we have seen enough of the mischiefs of it, of late years, and what havock it has made in the World; and Zeal even in the best cause, if it be not mixed with Prudence and Discretion, is of little or no use neither, and it may be questioned, whether it doth not do more harm than good. And because misinformed Zeal hath done so much harm, and indiscreet Zeal doth so little good, it hath come to pass, that all kind of Zeal, though never so wise and Chri-

ſtian, is counted, by too many, as a ridiculous thing and is almoſt every where, quite laughed out of Countenance; and not only a Zealot, in any cauſe (but almoſt any one that is Zealous in Religious matters) ſignifies, now a days little better than either a dangerous, or a fooliſh Perſon. But it ſhould be marked, that this hath happen'd, to the exceeding great dammage of true Religion, and to the no leſs encouragement of all kind of Schiſm and Profaneneſs, and by this means the Devil hath gotten an incredible advantage over the Souls of Men. But this diſtemper, which endangers the very life of Chriſtianity amongſt us, can no otherwiſe be cured, than by a more unanimous, truly Chriſtian, and prudent Zeal of the Clergy. For Prudence is that univerſal and ſupereminent Virtue, that makes all other Virtues and Graces effectual for the obtaining their ends; and it gives reputation and honour to whatſoever is truly good and commendable in our whole behaviour, 'tis this Cardinal Virtue of Prudence, that enable us to judge of things according to their own natures and tendences; whether they be like to be good or evil, hurtful or profitable to the common cauſe of true Religion, and of their ſeveral degrees and meaſures either way; it teacheth us, to judge of Perſons according to their various prejudices, tempers, diſtempers, inclinations, intereſts, and abilities, that we may make the beſt and wiſeſt uſe of them we can, to the profiting themſelves and to the doing the Church of God the greateſt ſervice. For all men have their ſeveral gifts and abilities, and there are ſcarce any, now a-days, without their prejudices, defects, and failings, in one kind or other, which muſt be conſidered, and alſo be allowed for, by every prudent perſon, that knows how to treat with

with, and uſe all men to the beſt advantage: Prudence likewiſe teacheth us to gueſs aright at the moſt likely events and conſequences of things, whereby we may avoid many evils and inconveniencies, which fooliſh, conceited, heedleſs, and obſtinate Perſons commonly fall into. Laſtly, Prudence teacheth us, to diſcern the fitteſt and propereſt times and ſeaſons for the doing of the beſt things: For that which may be eaſily accompliſhed at one time, cannot be brought to paſs without the greateſt difficulties and hazards imaginable, at another. However, your over-wary and prudential Men, too often omit all opportunities of mending any thing, under the notion, or pretence rather, of its being a very improper time to do it now: but this is only when their ſpiritual Zeal is not equally matched with their Worldly wiſdom. Hence it is very manifeſt, that both theſe, I mean, Zeal and Prudence, muſt meet together, where any notable and greatly profitable good works can be expected. And as Prudence is to direct in all practical matters whatſoever, to the making of them ſucceſsful; ſo, more particularly, it ſhould teach us to underſtand, the ſeveral genius's and prejudices of all the Adverſaries of our Church; that we may be ſure to give them as little offence, as poſſible may be; and that we may be better able to ſtop their mouths, abate their Calumnies, and wear off their falſe Notions of us, and to win them over, by degrees, if it may be to the Peace and Unity of the Church; and if that cannot be done, however, our behaviour ſhould be ſuch, that whoſoever is of the contrary part may have no evil thing to ſay of us. And to this purpoſe, we ſhould remember the blind Watch-

men, the dumb Dogs, the greedy Dogs, *Isa.* 56. the Idol Shepherds, *Zech.* 11. 17. and we ſhould conſider, that all the ſevereſt rebukes given by the Prophets to the wretchedly ſenſual, ignorant, proud, covetous, and careleſs Prieſts in the Old Teſtament, which are very many; and all the ſharpeſt reproofs of the Scribes and Phariſees, and Jewiſh Prieſts, that were delivered by Chriſt himſelf, and recorded in the New, are conſtantly thrown upon, and applyed unto us, by ſome or other of our Diſſenters; as though we had been the very Perſons they were at firſt levell'd againſt. But every Eye, that is not bloudſhed with Envy and Malice, or ſome other like diſtemper, muſt needs ſee the groſs injuſtice of ſuch dealing as this. Howbeit, we ſhould know, and well weigh theſe things (and alſo who they be that repreſent us as Carnal Goſpellers, formal Guides, unedifying Teachers, Hirelings, *&c.*) not that we might retaliate theſe injuries upon any of our Adverſaries, but that we might behave our ſelves ſo unblameablely, in all reſpects, that we may not give the leaſt cauſe for ſuch kind of Cenſures; and that, with St. *Paul*, we may cut off occaſion from all thoſe that ſeek, and deſire occaſion againſt us: and, indeed, that according to St. *Peter*'s advice, they may be made aſhamed, who falſly accuſe our good Converſation in Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16.

We ſhould not aim to vye with great ones in outward Pomp, or ſecular Glory; but our Honour and Ambition ſhould be, to excel in thoſe Graces, which truly adorn a Chriſtian of the higheſt rank; and that may bring the moſt immediate glory to God, and benefit to his Church: and in a word (for I muſt not run out into any more particulars) we ſhould

ſhould ſtudy to approve our-ſelves unto God, and, according to the Pattern of our Great Maſter, to do the will of him that ſent us, to let our Converſation be, in all points, as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the faithful Miniſters of it; *and not to ſeek our own, but the things of Jeſus Chriſt* in the firſt place, and then all men would quickly ſee, that we were the Miniſters of Chriſt, indeed, the Watchmen of God, and the Remembrancers of the Lord of Hoſt, ſet upon the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, to cry day and night, for the guiding of his People into the paths of truth and peace. *Iſai. 62. 6.*

And if the Clergy would thus unanimouſly, Zealouſly, and Prudently, ſeek to promote the honour of God, and the things of Jeſus Chriſt, 'tis not to be doubted, but God would wonderfully bleſs them, and all their endeavours of that kind; and it might yet be hoped, he might heal our breaches, and make all our Enemies to be at peace with us: that this Church as 'tis the beſt in its frame and conſtitution, ſo it it might become the happyeſt in all the World.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 2. of the Preface, *line* 17. *read* in the truth, In the Sermon, *p.* 7. *l.* 26. *r.* advantageous, *p.* 11. *l.* 12. *r.* ſurprizing accidents without a Comma, *p.* 18. *l.* 28. *r.* function for fountain, *p.* 22. *l.* 7, 8. *r.* γνησίως and μαριμνήσει, alſo *l.* 32. for our *r.* the.

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